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REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-10 and 21-23 are pending in the application, with claims 21-23 being new.

Claims 7 and 9 have been amended to clarify the informalities noted by the Examiner and claims 11-20 have been cancelled. This should remove the objections to these claims.

Claims 11-14 have been cancelled. This should remove the double patenting objection to claims 11-14.

Claims 4-16 and 18-20 stand rejected under 112, second paragraph. Claim 1 now includes limitations from claim 2 and provides antecedent basis for the first suction roller of claim 4. Claim 10 has been amended to depend from claim 9, providing antecedent basis for the noted elements. Claim 6 has been amended to clarify the substantially radially aligned blades. Claims 11-20 have been cancelled without prejudice. Several of the other claims have been amended for purposes of clarity. In view of this, it is respectfully requested that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-3, 6, 11 and 17 stand rejected under §102(b) as being anticipated by EP1097894.

Claim 1 has been amended to require:

means, associated with the first conveyor, by which the tension of the advancing strip is varied cyclically and synchronously with the action of the cutting means, capable of cyclical movement generated synchronously with the cutting frequency between two limit positions relative to an the outer, strip-contacting surface of the first conveyor, wherein one of the two limit positions is external to an outer surface of the first conveyor and the other of the two limit positions is internal to the outer surface of the first conveyor.

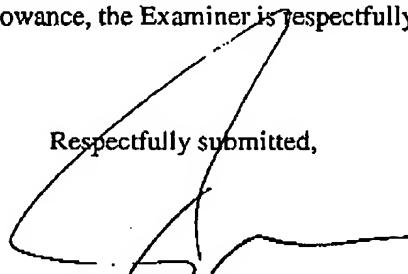
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The '894 reference does not disclose or suggest such a tension varying means. In all embodiments of the '894 reference, the tension varying mechanisms operate between limit positions which are all external to an outer surface of the first conveyor 10. None of the limit positions of any of the embodiments disclosed is interior to the outer surface of the first conveyor 10. In view of this, the '894 reference does not anticipate or render obvious claim 1 as amended, and it is respectfully requested that the rejection of claim 1 be withdrawn.

Since all of the remaining claims depend from claim 1, they are believed allowable for the same reasons as set forth above with respect to claim 1, as well as for the further limitation contained therein.

In view of the above, it is believed that the subject application is in condition for allowance and such a Notice is respectfully requested. Should anything else be required to place this application in condition for allowance, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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Timothy J. Klima  
Reg. No.: 34,852

Harbin King & Klima  
500 Ninth Street SE  
Washington, DC 20003  
Ph: 202-543-6404  
Fax: 202-543-6406